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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR WALKER ANNOUNCES KENTUCKY ELK ARRIVE IN JACKSON COUNTY FOR WISCONSIN ELK REINTRODUCTION PROGRAM

Thursday, March 26, 2015 - Press Release

Madison – Elk from Kentucky have reached their new home near Black River Falls in the first year of elk reintroduction efforts in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and a number of other key partners.

“This is a great day for Wisconsin as our effort to re-establish the elk population in Wisconsin takes the next step,” Governor Walker said. “We look forward to having a healthy and thriving elk herd, which will help boost tourism and, in turn, grow the economy.”

“The arrival of these elk in year one of this multi-year project is a milestone we could not have reached without support from a number of important groups and individuals,” said Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Cathy Stepp. “I am very excited to watch elk herds in Jackson County and Clam Lake grow and look forward to the positive effects this project will have within these communities and throughout Wisconsin.”

In all, 26 elk were transported to Jackson County after completing a 45-day quarantine period in Kentucky as part of a five-year agreement between Wisconsin and Kentucky that will provide Wisconsin with up to 150 wild elk. In 2015, all elk will be released in Jackson County, while future years will see animals released in both Jackson County and Clam Lake.

The DNR is taking special precautions to make sure the elk become accustomed to their new home in Jackson County. The elk will be held in a seven acre acclimation pen in the Black River State Forest for a minimum of 75 days, to satisfy health testing requirements and allow the elk to become familiar with their new surroundings.

In addition to the closed area surrounding the acclimation pen, individuals are asked to voluntarily avoid the general vicinity of closed area until the elk are released in early summer. Minimizing human disturbance near the release site will allow the elk to adjust to their new home and will help maximize the success of reintroduction efforts.

Funding for Wisconsin's elk translocation efforts is a result of key partnerships and support from the Ho-Chunk Nation, Jackson County Wildlife Fund, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and many others. The department has committed to using only funds received from partner groups.

For more information regarding elk in Wisconsin, visit dnr.wi.gov and search keyword "elk."

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